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FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
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AIDAC

STATE FOR AF AND AF/S
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PRETORIA FOR USAID HHALE, JWESSEL AND PDISKIN

E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: THE FLOODING IN MOZAMBIQUE: FACTS AND BACKGROUND
INFORMATION

REF: MAPUTO 00022

11. SUMMARY: FLOOD LEVELS OF THE ZAMBEZE RIVER IN MOZAMBIQUE CONTINUE TO RISE, BUT ARE STILL WITHIN THE FLOOD PLAIN. ACCORDINGLY, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE (GRM) HAS NOT YET DECLARED A DISASTER. AT THIS POINT IN THE RAINY SEASON, THESE LEVELS DO RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT POTENTIAL FUTURE FLOODING. CONTINGENCY PLANNING CONTINUES. PEOPLE ARE STILL RESISTING APPEALS BY THE GRM FOR THEM TO MOVE OUT OF THE FLOOD ZONES. WATER LEVELS FOR THE THREE BASINS BEING MONITORED (ZAMBEZE, PUNGWE AND SAVE) REMAIN HIGH. END SUMMARY.

12. RAINS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND MOZAMBIQUE HAVE CAUSED FLOODING AT LEVELS MORE OFTEN SEEN IN FEBRUARY AND NOT JANUARY, CAUSING CONCERN THAT FLOODING MIGHT BE WORSE THIS YEAR THAN LAST YEAR. HOWEVER, THE GRM REPORTS, SO FAR, THAT ALL RELOCATED FAMILIES ARE PRESENTLY IN SAFE ZONES AND NO OUTBREAKS OF DISEASE HAVE OCCURRED.

13. THE GRM HAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THAT THREE PEOPLE HAVE DIED (SEE REFTTEL) AS A RESULT OF THE CURRENT FLOODING. THE THREE DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO THE RECENT FLOODING TOOK PLACE IN THE DISTRICT OF NHAMATANDA (SOFALA PROVINCE) WHICH IS IN THE PUNGWE RIVER BASIN. TWO OF THE DEATHS WERE CHILDREN.

14. THE GRM STILL HAS NOT DECLARED AN EMERGENCY. THE HEAD OF MOZAMBIQUE'S NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (INGC) HAS BASED HIMSELF AT THE EMERGENCY OP CENTER (CENOE) IN CAIA AND IS CONSTANTLY ASSESSING THE SITUATION. HOWEVER, LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS IN THE AFFECTED DISTRICTS HAVE ARGUED THAT THE SITUATION IS DIRE.

15. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS MAY BE MAKING A PLAY FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE TO BE PROVIDED SO THAT THEY ARE SEEN AS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS. THE ADMINISTRATORS HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY VOCAL IN THE LOCAL PRESS THAT ASSISTANCE IS URGENTLY NEEDED, WHICH COULD BE RELATED TO LOCAL ELECTIONS PLANNED FOR LATER THIS YEAR; THEY MAY BELIEVE THAT THE PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE WOULD HELP THEIR RE-ELECTION. END COMMENT.

16. THE GRM IS ASKING FOR RESIDENTS IN FLOOD ZONES TO LEAVE. THEREFORE, IT APPEARS THAT THE RESIDENTS IN THE FLOOD ZONES ALONG THE ZAMBEZE RIVER RETURNED TO THESE AREAS AND REBUILT HOMES DESPITE THE FLOODS OF LAST YEAR AND DESPITE THE EXHORTATIONS OF THE GRM TO RE-LOCATE TO HIGHER GROUND. MOREOVER, MANY ARE NOT RESPONDING TO THIS YEAR'S EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ARE STILL IN POTENTIAL DANGER.

17. COMMENT: CONTINGENCY PLANS PRESENTLY PROJECT THAT WHILE 1.7 MILLION WILL BE AFFECTED, ONLY 282,000 PEOPLE WILL BE IN NEED OF FOOD ASSISTANCE. IT IS APPROPRIATE TO BEGIN PLANNING FOR HUMANITARIAN RELIEF, SHOULD THE GRM DECLARE AN EMERGENCY THIS YEAR. HOWEVER, SOME GRM OFFICIALS ARE FRUSTRATED THAT, IN THE CASE OF THE ZAMBEZE FLOOD ZONE, FOOD ASSISTANCE IS BEING PLANNED FOR THOSE WHO RETURNED TO LIVE IN THE FLOOD ZONES AGAIN AFTER BEING TOLD THAT THEY SHOULD NOT REBUILD IN THOSE AREAS. PRESENTLY, THE GRM IS

CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF LIMITING FOOD DISTRIBUTION TO RELOCATION CENTERS AND NOT PROVIDING ASSISTANCE AT ACCOMMODATION CENTERS. RELOCATION CENTERS ARE THE SITES THAT THE GRM HAS MADE AVAILABLE FOR PEOPLE TO BUILD NEW PERMANENT HOUSING. THESE WERE ESTABLISHED IN THE ZAMBEZE VALLEY AFTER LAST YEAR'S FLOODS. ACCOMMODATION CENTERS ARE TEMPORARY SITES WHERE PEOPLE CAN WAIT UNTIL THEY CAN RETURN HOME. THE CONCERN IS THAT PROVIDING DONOR ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO RETURNED TO LIVE IN THE FLOOD ZONE AND NOW NEED TO BE EVACUATED AGAIN THIS YEAR MIGHT ENCOURAGE A CONTINUED LACK OF COMPLIANCE WITH GRM RELOCATION EFFORTS AND PERPETUATE THE CYCLE OF ASSISTANCE IN THE FUTURE WHENEVER THE RIVERS SPILL INTO THE FLOOD PLAINS. END COMMENT.

¶8. AT A RECENT DISASTER MANAGEMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING (CCGC), IT WAS NOT/NOT DECIDED TO ISSUE AS A DISASTER DECLARATION AT THIS TIME. THE DISCHARGE RATE FROM THE CAHORA BASSA DAM HAS REMAINED STEADY, ALTHOUGH THE WATER LEVELS IN THE MID AND LOWER ZAMBEZE CONTINUE TO RISE. THE PUNGWE HAS RISEN SLIGHTLY, WHEREAS THE SAVE HAS NOT, ALTHOUGH IT IS EXPECTED TO RISE IN THE COMING DAYS BECAUSE OF HEAVY RAINS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.

¶9. THE FEBRUARY TO APRIL FORECASTS HAVE A LOW TO MODERATE CHANCE OF ABOVE AVERAGE RAINS IN NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE, BUT INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, A LOW TO MODERATE CHANCE OF BELOW AVERAGE RAINS FOR SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE.

¶10. ASSESSMENT TEAMS WILL BE IN THE FIELD NEXT WEEK TO GROUNDTRUTH RECENT PRESS REPORTS. MISSION CONTINUES TO MONITOR THE SITUATION.

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